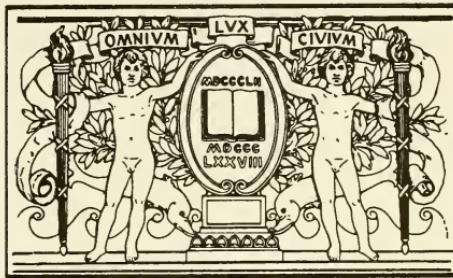


SOME HOME TRUTHS
RE
THE MAORI WAR
1863 TO 1869

GORTON



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SOME HOME TRUTHS
RE
THE MAORI WAR 1863 TO 1869
ON THE WEST COAST OF NEW ZEALAND

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SOME HOME TRUTHS RE THE MAORI WAR 1863 TO 1869

ON THE WEST COAST OF NEW ZEALAND

BY

LIEUT.-COL. EDWARD GORTON
NEW ZEALAND MILITIA

Late Captain H.M. 29th and 57th Regiments

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SOME HOME TRUTHS
RE
THE MAORI WAR 1863 TO 1869
ON THE WEST COAST OF NEW ZEALAND

CHAPTER I

UNSATISFACTORY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
GENERAL AND GOVERNOR

HAVING been requested by numerous friends to place on record various incidents that came under my personal knowledge in connection with the Maori War, from 1863 to 1869, during which period I held high and responsible positions, I have decided to do so; more particularly as I am able to place before my readers facts that have never before been published.

THE MAORI WAR

These facts materially alter the impression given by some writers, that the Imperial troops, under Lieutenant-General Sir D. A. Cameron, were to blame for many unsatisfactory movements during the war. In my opinion, the sole person who was to blame, and who was the cause of the generally hostile attitude of the Press towards the Imperial troops, was the then Governor, Sir George Grey, who interfered so unwarrantably, not only with Sir D. A. Cameron, but also with his successor, Major-General Sir Trevor Chute, that the great wonder is that our troops were as successful as they were.

There is not a shadow of doubt, in my opinion, that the most unfortunate thing that ever happened to New Zealand, was the appointment for the second time of Sir George Grey, as Governor. I maintain—and my opinion is borne out by many men of that day—that, had we had any other Governor, the war would have been far more speedily brought to an end; and many valuable lives and a

PERSONAL OBSERVATION

vast amount of treasure would have been saved.

It is not my intention, in this present little work, to go into the history of the war, but only to relate various incidents which occurred under my personal observation, and the truth of which I can vouch for; and hence I am giving to this book the name, 'SOME HOME TRUTHS *RE* THE MAORI WAR 1863 TO 1869.'

CHAPTER II

WARNINGS NEGLECTED, MURDER OF ESCORT

I ARRIVED in New Zealand in June, 1861, and joined H.M. 57th Regiment as Captain, having exchanged into it from H.M. 29th Regiment. The war in New Zealand had then closed; and we were supposed to be at peace with the natives; though, no doubt, a great feeling of discontent existed among them at that period, and it was unsafe for Europeans to travel in the country occupied by Kingite Maoris at that time. The Maoris had a King of their own in Waikato; and the various tribes down to Wellington furnished supporters to the King movement, and were called 'Kingites.'

Our troops in Taranaki, during the year 1862, were quartered in different redoubts,

BISHOP SELWYN

north and south of New Plymouth, for the protection of that town, in the event of the natives rising again. It was about this period that Te Ua, a Maori prophet, started the new religion, named 'Hau'; and his disciples were called 'Hauhaus.' This religion so worked upon the feelings of the natives that they became fanatics; and those who formerly had such power over the natives, lost it. In 1862, the natives established a toll gate at Tata-raimaka, twelve miles south of New Plymouth, and would not allow any one to pass, without paying a toll. Bishop Selwyn, who tried to go among the natives there, was stopped by them, as he himself told me, evidently feeling it most keenly; for, during the whole of his career, he had never before been stopped from going wherever he pleased, and that noblest and grandest of men felt that the influence he had hitherto exercised over the natives had vanished.

In April. 1863 two companies of the 57th Regiment, under the command of

THE MAORI WAR

Captain Woodall, occupied a redoubt at Tataraimaka, and two companies of the same regiment, under the command of myself, garrisoned the redoubt at Poutoko, half way between that post and the town of New Plymouth. On April 27th, a native chief, known as Bob Hurangi, brought me a letter for Sir George Grey, the Governor, who was at New Plymouth, warning him that the natives from the Kaitake ranges had laid an ambuscade midway between the two redoubts.

I myself sent an orderly in with that letter to Sir George Grey, and stopped the settlers from going between the redoubts. Sir George Grey took no notice whatever of this warning ; and that very day week, May 4th, 1863, the natives laid another ambuscade at the same spot, and, unfortunately, caught an escort of eight of the 57th Regiment, who happened to be going into New Plymouth on duty. Lieutenant Tragett and Assistant-Surgeon Hope of the 57th Regiment were riding just in front of the escort, never dreaming

ATTACK ON ESCORT

for one moment that there was any danger, when they and the escort were suddenly fired upon by the natives, Assistant-Surgeon Hope being killed by the first volley.

The escort, though loaded, were not capped ; for, though the natives were in an unsettled state, no one expected an immediate outbreak. Lieutenant Tragett went back and at once took command of the escort, but the second volley killed more men, and wounded him. He then held up a white handkerchief, hoping to save the remainder ; but, in spite of that, they and he were all killed, excepting Private Kelly, who ran into some high fern, and thus escaped to tell the doleful tale.

Had Sir George Grey taken notice of the warning that Bob Hurangi sent him, through me, on April 27th, and warned the troops to be prepared for such an attack, that massacre, I maintain, would never have taken place.

Such was the commencement of the war

THE MAORI WAR

of 1863. I gave up the command of the Poutoko redoubt on April 30th, and on May 4th Sir D. A. Cameron was good enough to place me on his staff as his extra *aide-de-camp*.

CHAPTER III

UNWARRANTABLE INTERFERENCE WITH GENERAL CAMERON BY THE GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY

AN expedition was immediately organised for the punishment of these murderers, who occupied a position in the Kaitake ranges, and who, it has since been ascertained, were then in no way prepared to resist an attack. No expense had been spared in completing the necessary arrangements; and the General had everything in perfect order. The corps were told off for their different duties; and the 57th Regiment, who were most keen to avenge the death of their comrades—for they looked upon it as nothing short of murder—were detailed to lead the attack. The

THE MAORI WAR

force was to march at night, and surround the native settlement in the ranges before the break of day. It being a drizzling rain at the time, the weather was exactly what was wanted for this particular work, and no force could have been in better spirits, or more fit to carry it out.

On the night these arrangements were made, I was dining alone with the General in his tent. About 8 o'clock, just as we had finished dinner, an orderly arrived from New Plymouth, with a letter for the General from the Governor, Sir George Grey. That letter, the General read to me. The purport of it was this: 'Charles Brown, the Superintendent of Taranaki, has just come to see me. He tells me that the town of New Plymouth is in great danger, and he feels sure that unless you come back at once to defend it, the women and children will be massacred; so he hopes you will not attack Kaitake, but come back immediately to New Plymouth. The *Eclipse* (a man of war) cannot co-operate, on account of the drizzling rain,

PRESS CRITICISM

so I hope you will return at once, without attacking."

Such was the purport of the letter read to me by the General. I made no remark as to what I thought the General should do, but I sincerely hoped he would not obey the Governor, but that he would attack Kaitake first, and go in afterwards to New Plymouth. The General complained bitterly of the manner in which he was interfered with, after he had formed his plans, but in face of such an urgent appeal, did not attack, and the next day, marched the force back to New Plymouth, much to the disgust of every one ; for all felt it very keenly. It was not to be wondered at that the Press took the matter up very bitterly and did not spare the Imperial troops or the General in their criticism.

I must now take my readers with me to the year 1886. In May of that year I happened to be staying at the Wellington Club, in the town of Wellington ; Mr Charles Brown, the ex-Superintendent of

THE MAORI WAR

Taranaki, was staying there also. The subject of the Maori war cropped up, and Mr Charles Brown expressed his contempt for the action of the Imperial troops on this particular occasion ; I naturally was aroused at such an attack, and told those who were present in the room, that he, Mr Charles Brown, was the cause of the troops coming back to New Plymouth, as he was in such a mortal fright, that he went to the Governor, and begged him to recall the troops, and not let them attack Kaitake. Mr Charles Brown looked absolutely dumbfounded, and when I told him of the letter from Sir George Grey to General Cameron, which I had heard read, he said : ‘ I will swear I never went near him, that I never told him anything of the sort ; on the contrary, it was I who wrote so bitterly against the troops.’

My readers can imagine how indignant I felt ; so highly indignant, that I wrote the following letter to my respected General :—

FRUSTRATED PLANS

WELLINGTON CLUB, WELLINGTON, N. Z.,
May 23rd, 1886.

MY DEAR SIR DUNCAN,

Though many years have passed since I had the pleasure of addressing you, a little event occurred last night at the club here, which I am sure you will be interested to hear.

I need hardly say I have always fought the battles of my old and most respected chief, as against Sir George Grey. I can never forget the little episode that happened at Oakura, in May 1863, about ten days after the murder of our poor fellows on the beach, when you had everything in perfect order, favoured also by a drizzling rain, for the attack on the Kaitake Ranges, which, however, was prevented by a letter which you received from Sir George Grey, at 8 o'clock on the night before the morning on which the premeditated attack was to take place at break of day. In that letter, which you received while I was dining with you alone, and which you read to me, Sir George Grey wrote that Charles Brown, the Superintendent of Taranaki, had told him that the town of New Plymouth was in great danger and that he expected an immediate attack; and that, consequently, you must come back at once, and on no account make the attack on Kaitake, as he felt sure the women and children of New Plymouth would be massacred; and he also wrote that the *Eclipse* could not

THE MAORI WAR

co-operate on account of the weather. Charles Brown was here last evening, and says he never said anything of the sort. This adds, I have no doubt, to numerous other incidences of a like nature, but I feel it my duty, as your late extra A. D. C., to make my report, though so many years have rolled by.

To this letter I received the following reply :—

CAMBRIDGE HOUSE, KIDBROOK, BLACKHEATH,
September 6th, 1886.

MY DEAR COLONEL GORTON,

It was very kind of you to give me the information contained in your letter of May 23rd, which I must apologise for having taken so long to answer. I remember the circumstances to which you refer, and I was not in the least surprised to hear that the reasons alleged by Sir G. Grey, for recalling me to New Plymouth, had no foundation in truth. It was just like him ; but after such a lapse of time, it is not worth while my taking any notice of it ; I was very unfortunate in serving under a Governor * * * * who was constantly interfering with my plans, and giving orders to officers under my command, at variance with the instructions they had previously received from me. As an instance of the mischief caused by this kind of interference : When I dispatched a force to Tauranga, with in-

THAT FORMIDABLE PAH

structions to patrol the country round constantly, so as to prevent the natives from constructing a pah in the neighbourhood of the settlement, Sir G. Grey, without my knowledge, gave strict orders to the officer commanding, on no account to move out of his redoubt, *not even if he were attacked*; the consequence of which was that the Maoris were allowed to construct that formidable pah,* the assault of which cost us the lives of so many officers. After its capture, I again gave the same instructions to Colonel Greer, who in one of his patrols, came suddenly upon the Maoris as they were in the act of commencing the construction of another pah, and attacked and defeated them with great loss. The same thing occurred in regard to the Mataitawa pah at New Plymouth; which I was urging Colonel Warre to attack, and which he was ready to do, when I learned from him that he had received orders from Sir G. Grey prohibiting him from doing so. These acts of Sir G. Grey seem not to be generally known; at least, they have not been noticed by any of those who have written accounts of the war. * * * * * Among other misstatements in Mr. Rusden's *history*, he asserts that I asked for a force of six thousand men, to attack the Wereroa pah; I happen to have in my possession a copy of the letter I wrote to Sir G. Grey on the subject, taken at the time by Colonel Dean Pitt, and in it, the correct number,

* This was the Gate Pah in the Tauranga district.

THE MAORI WAR

two thousand, is given. In all my letters this is the number I invariably specified, not that even that number was necessary for the mere attack and capture of a pah, but because it could not be effectually blockaded with a smaller force, and I considered it perfectly useless to undertake operations against a pah, without a chance of taking prisoners, or inflicting some loss on the garrison.

Another mischievous interference of Sir G. Grey was his stupid release of the prisoners taken by me at Rangiriri, which placed us in a most helpless position, as we did not dare to follow them up, on account of the settlers in the north, whose lives were entirely at their mercy ; and all operations were necessarily suspended, until they went back to their own lands ; but the most surprising part of Sir G. Grey's proceedings was that, after obstructing in the way I have mentioned operations urgently necessary, he all at once became most warlike, carrying the war (most unjustifiably, in my opinion) into a part of the country hitherto undisturbed, and of such a nature that no advantage could possibly be gained, without indefinitely prolonging the war. After four or five years of desultory warfare, the destruction of whole settlements, and the loss of many gallant officers and men, the Maoris recovered possession of all the land taken from them, including the celebrated Wereroa pah, and drove the Colonial Forces back

PUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE

to the town of Wanganui ; so that affairs were in a worse state than when I left the Colony. So much for Sir G. Grey's management of affairs, for which he has been so belauded by Mr Rusden, and others.

I am glad to hear you are doing so well, and with my best wishes,

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

D. A. CAMERON.

I forgot to say that the error relative to the force I required to attack the Wereroa pah, appears in the published correspondence between the Governor and myself ; and how it got there, I cannot conceive. It was pointed out to me by one of my A. D. C.'s on the voyage home, but I thought it too absurd to take any notice of it.—D. A. C.

I considered this letter of such importance to the history of New Zealand that I was much disposed to publish it at once, especially as I was also anxious to see justice done to the Imperial troops. I, however, consulted an officer of very high rank, as to whether I could in honour publish it without the consent of General Cameron. He thought I could not, and I

THE MAORI WAR

therefore wrote for the General's consent, and received a most courteous and kind letter, asking me not to publish it, as it would, of course, give rise to a controversy, into which, being a very old man and a permanent invalid with a miserable complaint, he would be quite unfit to enter; and he would like to pass the few remaining days of his life in peace and quietness. I naturally adhered to his wishes, and it was not very long after this that the dear old General, who so nobly did his duty to his Queen and country, passed away. Sir George Grey has also passed away, but in justice to my late respected General, in justice to the Army, both of which were so abused for faults that were not theirs, I feel I am perfectly justified in publishing the correspondence now, to be recorded as facts of New Zealand history.

To make the evidence complete, however, I wrote to Mr Charles Brown a year or two ago, to substantiate in writing what took place at the club in Wellington in

THE GENERAL'S DEFENCE

1886. The following is a copy of a letter he sent to me in reply :—

NEW PLYMOUTH,
December 20th, 1897.

DEAR COLONEL GORTON,—

I now reply to yours of November 3rd, sent on to me in Wellington.

When you told me at the Wellington Club, on May 22nd, 1886, the reason that Sir G. Grey gave to General Cameron for asking him to bring back the troops to New Plymouth it was the first time that I had heard any reason given ; and I was astonished at the Governor having given me (then Superintendent of the Province, and commanding the Militia) as his authority for saying that I expected an immediate attack on New Plymouth, and praying that the troops might be sent back at once to New Plymouth, otherwise I felt sure the women and children would be massacred. This statement of Sir G. Grey had not one atom of truth in it ; I never spoke to him on any native or other question, always going to Ministers, of whom there were two here, Domett and Bell ; and I never heard that the natives intended to attack the town at that time, or at any other after General Cameron assumed the command. I have recently seen Major Parris about it, and he never heard of an intended native attack on the town at that time. I believe Sir G. Grey was not usually wanting in courage, but

THE MAORI WAR

it is evident that, at that time, he was in a state of panic, as he ordered the Royal Artillery guard on the ammunition and other stores at Mount Elliott to go and protect his quarters at Cudlippes, and the Volunteer guard under Captain H.A. Atkinson, that was over the boathouse, to take up the Artillery guard at Mount Elliott. He asked Captain Bulkley to show him how to load a revolver, but his hands trembled so much, he could not do it. Parris thinks that the massacre of Hope and Tragett and their escort, ten days before, had completely unhinged Sir G. Grey for the time, possibly from the fact that it might not have taken place, if Sir George had not turned a deaf ear to the warnings of Major Parris and the friendly natives, that an ambuscade would be placed there on that day ; and yet he assured General Cameron, in the presence of Mr Gorst and Major Parris, that these stories were all lies, and it was on this assurance that General Cameron and his staff were riding out to Tataraimaka, and, I have understood, saw from the Oakura Camp the volley of the ambuscade at Wairau that killed all but one of the party under Lieutenant Tragett, and where General Cameron would have been, if he had been a little earlier.

As to myself and my family on that night, we slept, as we always did, in the official residence outside the lines, within which were Sir G. Grey's quarters, and where my adjutant, Captain Stapp,

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

with his family, lived throughout the war, and does so now, a quarter of a mile further out still, without feeling any anxiety about our wives and children.

Yours ever truly,

CHARLES BROWN.

As it turns out, had we made the attack on the Kaitake ranges as arranged, we would have found the place completely unguarded ; and, from the position the natives were in, they must have all been killed or taken prisoners. At that time such a success might possibly have saved the country from what afterwards became a most costly war, both in the loss of most valuable lives, and of a vast amount of treasure.

CHAPTER IV

ACTION OF KATIKARA

IN the beginning of June, 1863 General Cameron organised another expedition, comprising a battery of Artillery, detachment of Royal Engineers, the 57th, portion of 65th, and 70th Regiments ; and on the fourth of that month he fought the action of Katikara, named after a small river running past the Tataraimaka redoubt, about three miles from which the enemy had thrown up a redoubt on a high hill commanding the Katikara.

The Artillery opened fire with their Armstrong guns on the redoubt at break of day from the north side of the river, and H. M. S. *Eclipse* shelled the same position from the sea, about four miles distant. Colonel Warre, commanding the 57th

A SHARP ENGAGEMENT

Regiment, with a portion of the 57th and 65th Regiments, crossed the Katikara, and advanced in skirmishing order against the enemy's rifle pits, under cover of the guns, supported by the remainder of the 57th Regiment, under Colonel Logan. The rifle pits were found unoccupied, the enemy having concentrated their forces in the redoubt and in the high fern on the sides and behind it. Colonel Logan's reserve then became the attacking party, charged, and carried the position at the point of the bayonet. Seeing the change of movement, General Cameron sent me at once to bring up the 70th Regiment, under Colonel Mulock, to support the 57th Regiment; but before they came up, the latter regiment had got possession of the redoubt.

On counting the dead we found twenty-two of the enemy, the casualties on our side being ten wounded. The dead were laid out in a line for the inspection of the Governor, who had come down in H. M. S. *Eclipse*. They were an exceptionally fine

THE MAORI WAR

body of men, but, unfortunately, were not those who had murdered the escort a month before, but had come from the upper Wanganui river, to assist those who were fighting against us. The men whom we were particularly anxious to punish were still occupying the Kaitake ranges, seven miles further north.

What I particularly noticed about this engagement was, that our men could see so little to fire at, as the enemy, who were not in the redoubt, were concealed in the high fern surrounding it on three sides ; a constant fire was kept up at the redoubt and high fern, where the enemy was presumed to be, with the result above told. The fern was so high that, when I was helping to collect the dead, I found one body not ten yards from the redoubt, which I could not see. The enemy beat a hasty retreat, and did not trouble us again in that locality for some time.

CHAPTER V

NARROW ESCAPE FROM AN AMBUSCADE

THE wounded were sent on board H. M. S. *Eclipse*, which steamed for New Plymouth, taking the Governor, General, and all the staff excepting myself; I was left to see that the horses belonging to the staff were taken back to New Plymouth; they were ridden by the servants and orderlies of their respective owners. Surgeon Mackinnon (afterwards Sir W. Mackinnon, and chief of the medical department) rode with me, and Mr Parris, native commissioner, and Lieutenant Fergusson of the Royal Engineers, formed a portion of the mounted party—in all, thirteen.

Colonel Warre took command of the troops, and marched them into New Plymouth. Our mounted party were

THE MAORI WAR

about a mile in front of the column. We had not proceeded four miles when I met two mounted orderlies coming towards us at full gallop. I stopped them and inquired the reason for their riding so hard, when I was informed that they were carrying a dispatch for the officer commanding the column, which was to be delivered to him as soon as possible. They particularly mentioned there was no danger, yet subsequently I found out that this dispatch was warning the officer commanding the column, that the natives from the Kaitake ranges had sent twelve men down and laid an ambuscade on the high ground commanding the sea-beach, where we were riding, at the very spot where these men had murdered our escort a month before ; and when I stopped these orderlies, I was only about a hundred and fifty yards from the ambuscade.

Being told there was no danger, we simply walked our horses into the teeth of the ambuscade. Dr Mackinnon and myself were the last two, and as we

AN AMBUSCADE

got to the Wairau stream, I asked Dr Mackinnon to show me where poor Tragett fell, and just as we turned our horses to the spot, we received a volley from the enemy from a cliff above us about thirty yards distant, followed by a second volley, and not one of the thirteen was hit. One man, however, was thrown, and Mr Parris, Lieutenant Fergusson, R.E., Dr Mac- kinnon, and myself, after our horses had recovered from the fright caused by these sudden volleys, returned to cover his retreat; but the enemy, directly they delivered their fire, retired to the ranges and we could not get up the cliff to follow them.

We did not bless the officer who sent this dispatch, who certainly ought himself to have sent out some of his men from the Oakura redoubt, where he was stationed, to cut off these men, which could easily have been done, instead of sending men to warn the column on the march, and absolutely allowing those orderlies to pass within thirty yards of the ambuscade

THE MAORI WAR

in place of instructing them to keep well out to sea, and run the gauntlet at a much longer range; while the orderlies themselves, absurd as it is to think of, knew nothing whatever of the risk they were called upon to run.

CHAPTER VI

A BIG COMMAND FOR SO YOUNG A MAN

THE Waikatos south of Auckland had at this time broken out in open rebellion, and General Cameron, accompanied by his staff, went at once to Auckland, taking all the Imperial troops with him from Taranaki, excepting the 57th Regiment, and carried out the Waikato campaign.

Unfortunately, I had sent in my papers in December, 1862, to retire from the Imperial service, for the purpose of settling in the province of Canterbury ; I therefore, as war had broken out, offered my services to the Colonial Government, and was in July, 1863 appointed to the command of the Wellington Militia district, with the rank of Major. To this command was immediately added that of the Wairarapa

THE MAORI WAR

and Castlepoint Militia districts, covering a country about eighty miles by twenty, and comprising a force, when all were enrolled, of fifteen hundred and sixty Militia and Volunteers. My age at that time was only twenty-five; I was most fortunate, however, in coming under the control of Dr Featherston, then Superintendent of Wellington, and general Government Agent. His exceptionally eminent services to his country must form the subject of a special chapter.

CHAPTER VII

CELEBRATED ACHIEVEMENTS OF DR FEATHERSTON

No book, giving an account of incidents in connection with the Maori war of 1863 to 1869, will be complete without specially recording the splendid services rendered to the country by the late Dr Featherston, for many years Superintendent of the Province of Wellington, who proved himself without doubt to be, not only one of the ablest administrators that the colony has ever had, but also, by his actions, to be an exceptionally brave man, possessing both great moral and personal pluck. It was entirely owing to the possession, by Dr Featherston, of these qualities, that the Wellington and Wairarapa districts were in August, 1863 saved from war.

THE MAORI WAR

I am very proud of being able to say I can fully bear witness to that. I see statues erected to some of New Zealand's prominent men, in Wellington and elsewhere, but no one ever deserved a statue in Wellington itself to perpetuate his name more than Dr Featherston; and I still hope that Wellington will rise to the occasion, and do its duty. Wellington never had such a staunch friend, and Wellington seems to have forgotten it.

In July, 1863 matters were so serious, that it was considered necessary to call out the Militia in the Wellington and other districts for training, and I was specially sent down to take command on that account. To give an idea of the state of the district at that time, I here quote from Dr Featherston's official report, published in the appendices at the end of Proceedings of the Wellington Provincial Council. (Session XI. 1864, re Defence, pages 36 to 39, an extract bearing on that subject.)

AN ABSURD PANIC

The Superintendent, accompanied by Major Gorton (the commandant of the Militia), left Wellington on Monday the 17th. Early that morning a special messenger had arrived bringing to the Honourable Mr Mantell, a letter addressed to Mr Bidwell by Te Manihera of the Wairarapa, stating that the natives intended that very day to attack the Hutt Militia. A note to that effect from Mr Bidwell to Mr Ludlam was left at Mr Ludlam's residence at five o'clock in the morning. No time was lost in arousing the whole district, and in calling out the Militia ; and, as a necessary consequence, a complete and most absurd panic ensued. While many women and children were making their way to town, the whole male population of the Hutt were on the *qui vive* ; every labouring man losing a day's work.

In consequence of certain escapades of Hutt Militia Officers, positive and repeated instructions had been issued to them that they were not to allow their men to bring out their arms, except for the purpose of drill, without the authority of the Commandant ; but the whole way up to the Taita, the Superintendent and Major Gorton met men carrying arms. Every one of these men Major Gorton accosted kindly, explaining that in carrying arms they were acting against his orders, but that he did not in the slightest degree blame them, inasmuch they were obeying

THE MAORI WAR

their own immediate officers. Arrived at the Taita, Major Gorton found the Taita Militia Company drilling in a field adjoining the road, and Major Gorton at once addressed them, saying : 'My order was to request that you should not take your rifles away from your houses, except for the purpose of training and exercise ; but I do not find fault with you, as you obeyed an order given by the Captain, contrary to my instructions.

' You must now bear in mind that you are on no account to go about the country with your rifles, unless you get an order from your Captain to do so, who will, in the event of danger, obtain an authority from the magistrate, pending approval of His Honour the Superintendent, who alone has the power to call the Militia out for actual service.'

The Major had no sooner finished addressing the men, than they were dismissed, either by Captain Cleland or Captain Beetham, when they at once rushed to the road, and insulted in the grossest possible manner Major Gorton, on account of the remarks he had made, and the Superintendent, on account of his known friendliness to the natives. In the Upper Hutt, the panic caused by these ill-judged proceedings was almost as great ; but the men had so far cooled down, that they were asking who was to pay them for the day's work they had lost. The Superintendent induced a few refugees to turn back to their homes. When the Superintendent arrived at Featherston, he

LETTER TO WI TAKO

found so many families leaving the district, that, instead of going to the lower part of the valley, the place of the meeting, he pushed on to Greytown with a view to reassure the settlers. He ascertained, as he surmised, on his way up to the Hutt settlers, that Manihera's letter to Mr Bidwell was written when he was drunk, if it was not written at the instigation of a drunken publican.

It will be thus seen that the district at this time was in a very unsettled state; and any rash action on the part of the settlers would have undoubtedly involved it in war, which Dr Featherston was doing his utmost to prevent. It was at this time that Ngairo, the recognised chief of the Kingites in the Wairarapa, wrote a letter to Wi Tako of Waikanae, then a Kingite, calling upon him to attack the settlers at Pahautanui, while he attacked them at the Upper Hutt. (Wi Tako subsequently became a most loyal native, and was for some years, and up to the time of his death, a member of the Legislative Council of the Colony.) The extract

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quoted from Dr Featherston's report gives an account of our travels up to Greytown. We found the district in a state of panic, caused by Ngairo's letter just mentioned, which panic was somewhat increased after the notable meeting of the Kingite natives at Papawai, near Greytown, on the evening of our arrival at the latter place.

Dr Featherston went to that meeting at eight o'clock p.m., attended by Mr Wardell, R.M., Mr S. Deighton, native interpreter, and myself; one or two settlers were also present.

The whare in which the meeting took place contained between thirty and forty Kingites, including their chiefs, the leading chief being Ngairo, who wrote the treacherous letter to Wi Tako, calling upon him to attack the settlers. Around the walls were hung about thirty guns ready for action. When you consider that there was at that time in the Wairarapa district a population of a thousand men, women, and children (from which I raised a force

CRITICAL POSITION

of three hundred and fifty Volunteers, and a few Militia), all of them unarmed, excepting about forty who had fowling pieces, and most of these useless; that the district was fifty miles from Wellington, separated by the Rimutaka range; and that excepting at the mouth of a large lake in a valley near the sea, there was only one means of escape, and that by the road over this range, it will be seen that the position, to say the least of it, was most critical.

It was then that Dr Featherston showed his great moral and personal pluck. He knew the public were against him because he did not send up an armed force at once, and he also knew that to do that meant war and massacre. He relied solely on his great personal power with the natives, Kingites as well as friendlies. The magnificent and fearless manner in which he addressed the Kingite natives will never be forgotten by those present. When he told them that, after the treacherous letters they had written, they were not to be trusted,

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that steps would be immediately taken to protect the Europeans and friendly natives without their being consulted at all, up jumped the different chiefs, each in their turn running up and down the centre of the whare, some with a gun in their hands, all emphasising their warlike speeches by striking their naked thighs with the palms of their hands, making a report as loud as a pistol, and in a most excited manner and loud voice declaring if the Militia were called out, or troopers or soldiers were sent up, that evil would arise, which meant that they would fight, ending their speeches by asking Dr Featherston, 'When are you going to call out the Militia? When are you going to call out the trooper?' (meaning the Wellington Defence Force). 'When are you going to send up the soldiers?' (referring to H.M. 14th Regiment, a detachment of which was stationed at Wellington). The culprit, Ngairo, was the last to speak, and the most excited of all. Dr Featherston then (twelve o'clock at night) stood up,

DR FEATHERSTON'S SPEECH

smoking a cigar, as if nothing unusual was happening, gave a puff of smoke, and replied: 'At once,' bidding them 'Good-night.' Never to be forgotten were the astounded looks of the natives at his coolness.

The following extract is from the official report of the speech made by Dr Featherston at this meeting, and shows how fearlessly he spoke, when we were really entirely at their mercy :—

His Honour, after stating the grounds upon which he claimed their confidence, briefly repeated the statements he had made at Otaki ; called upon them to answer the questions he had put to Wi Tako and others, to which no answer had been given ; pointed out that the result of the King movement had been war and bloodshed, and after Mr Deighton, by his direction, had read Matutaera's,¹ Wi Tako's, Ngairo's, and other letters, denounced in the strongest possible terms the gross treachery evinced by the writers of those letters, especially dwelling upon Ngairo's letter ; and ended by demanding an explicit explanation from Ngairo.

Ngairo at once admitted that the letters read

¹ Matutaera was Maori King.

THE MAORI WAR

were accurate ; but that Matutaera's and his own letters in reply, were written in consequence of the Militia being called out in this province, which he considered meant an attack upon the Maoris. He declared that he would not tolerate volunteers, Militia, defence force, troops, barracks, or stockades, that he would fire upon them.

The Superintendent, by reference to dates, showed that Matutaera's and Ngairo's letters were written before the Militia had been called out in this province ; and replied that Ngairo's threats would not have the slightest influence upon him, that he dared him to carry out his threats ; that, after the treachery displayed in his own and other letters, he would, unless the settlers all came forward as volunteers at once, call out the Militia and arm the whole white population, that he would build stockades and place the settlers in a position to defy any attack from the Kingites ; but whatever measures he took would be simply defensive for the purpose of protecting pakehas (Europeans) and friendly Maoris ; that the first shot should be by the Kingites ; that shot fired, they must take the consequences ; that the Governor would move the troops wherever he pleased ; the troops were not usually sent to such districts as Wairarapa, unless the peace had been broken or danger was apprehended ; and that therefore, as long as they remained quiet and peaceable, there would be no occasion for the troops ; that the

TREACHERY EXPOSED

defence force was not so much a military force as a police force, to see the Queen's laws executed ; that, if they dared to carry out their threats, they would soon see the troops and the defence force coming down the Rimutaka.

Mataiha said : 'Where did you get the letters you have read to us ?'

The Superintendent : 'I told you at Tahitarata that Wi Tako gave Matutaera's letter to Captain Edwards. If I told you how I obtained possession of the other letters, I might get certain natives into trouble with you.'

Mataiha : 'Where did you get the information that we had discussed a proposal to rise and kill the settlers ? You got the information from the Governor. Who are the natives who told you that ? It is not true.'

The Superintendent : 'How can you say that ? Matutaera, in his letter, calls upon you to rise and drive out the Europeans ; that means to kill the Europeans. Ngairo says, in reply to Matutaera : "The canoe is prepared ; we only await the King's order to paddle it." Ngairo says : "We are ready to rise as soon as Matutaera gives the word." Wi Tako says the same thing. No further proof of your treacherous designs can be required, and therefore I am prepared for you.'

Dr Featherston, previous to this meeting, had interviewed the friendly natives,

THE MAORI WAR

and the following extract from his official report shows what their feelings were about the safety of the district:—

Ngatuerere and Manihera warned the Superintendent against believing one word the Kingites said. They declared that they knew that the Kingites would in a day or two rise and attack the settlers ; that the loyal natives were not safe ; that the Superintendent ought to give them arms and ammunition as well as the settlers.

On coming away from the meeting, I remarked to Dr Featherston : ‘Things look rather serious.’ Dr Featherston replied : ‘All bounce.’ I then replied : ‘Funny bounce.’

Every one at this time was dead against the action of Dr Featherston ; but, I must say, he inspired me with implicit confidence, and what followed shows that this confidence was well merited.

The next day at one o’clock, when we were dining at Fuller’s hotel, Greytown, Wi Waka, one of the Kingite chiefs who had spoken at the meeting the evening

THREAT OF KINGITES

before, brought a letter to Dr Featherston, who invited the chief to sit down to dinner, and after he had read the letter, began to chaff him about the proposed fight alluded to therein, jocularly asking the chief if he thought he would be able to hit him. This action of Dr Featherston, in treating the matter so lightly, so enraged the young chief that he dropped his knife and fork, and went straight out of the hotel without taking any dinner. I was sitting next to Dr Featherston when this occurred, and he whispered to me: 'Come up to my bedroom; matters are most serious.' That was the first time I heard him acknowledge there was any danger. The letter from the Kingites was to say that they would carry arms on the following Tuesday; in other words, that they would fight. This was on Friday; we had not in the district a single man armed with a rifle, and they meant fighting on Tuesday! Before I left Wellington, I had given orders for arms and ammunition to be packed ready for any emergency.

THE MAORI WAR

I sent for Hastwell, the well-known coach proprietor and carrier in Greytown, and said: 'Are you prepared to take an oath before Dr Featherston and myself, that you will not divulge to any one, your wife included, what we are going to tell you about the state of the district?' Having consented and taken the oath, he was made aware of the danger, and was asked if he would go at once to Wellington, by himself, and bring up fifty rifles and accoutrements, with sixty rounds of ball ammunition for each as fast as he could, without any escort, treating them simply as ordinary goods, and deliver them in Greytown to me, without a solitary soul knowing anything about it. He said he would do it, tell no one, and his price was £30; which was accepted.

The arms and ammunition arrived on Sunday morning, unknown to any one.

In the meantime, I formed and swore in the Greytown, Carterton, and Masterton Rifle Volunteers, and from the Greytown and Carterton Volunteers picked out

FEATHERSTON VOLUNTEERS

fifty men to arm on Monday morning. I issued arms and ball ammunition to these men on that morning, but was only able to teach them to load, fix bayonets, and form fours. As many of them had never seen a rifle before in their lives, and as during that period the cartridge, after the powder was put into the muzzle, had to be reversed, I had great difficulty in teaching them in the one day as much as I did. On the following day—that fixed by the Kingites as the day on which they were to carry their arms—I marched these volunteers with fixed bayonets through Greytown. The Kingites were so dumbfounded at the settlers being armed in that manner, knowing they had no rifles in the district, and at Dr Featherston's carrying out exactly what he said he would do, that they gave up the idea of fighting, and peace, thanks to Dr Featherston, has ever reigned in the Wairarapa.

The next day I formed and swore in the Featherston Rifle Volunteers; these four corps, numbering about 350 men, all

THE MAORI WAR

of whom were at once armed and drilled, formed a battalion of rifle volunteers any commanding officer might feel proud to command, being composed of men who were determined at all hazards to defend their homes.

It was a source of satisfaction to me, in addition to receiving the thanks of the Government, to find that the work I was able to do gave satisfaction to the inhabitants of the Wairarapa and the volunteers, as is shown in the undermentioned cutting from the *New Zealand Advertiser*, published August, 1863.

Major Gorton and the Greytown Volunteers.—We stated in our Thursday's issue (August 27th,) that the conduct of Major Gorton during his progress through the Wairarapa, merited and received the warm approval of the inhabitants. We stated also that the promptitude with which he has acted in furnishing the settlers with the means of defence, deserved the thanks of the province. It will be seen by the following address to the gallant Major from the Greytown Volunteers, dated August 27th, how well we expressed the views of the settlers in that district :—

ADDRESS FROM VOLUNTEERS

To MAJOR GORTON, *Commander Militia and Volunteers.*
SIR,

We, the members of the Greytown Volunteer Corps, humbly beg you will accept our sincere thanks for the kind interest manifested by you in our district; also for the energy displayed in embodying our corps, in allaying the fear that existed, and placing us in a position to protect ourselves and our homes. We also feel proud in having one at our head in whom we can place implicit confidence; and furthermore hope that in us you will always find men who are ready when wanted.

We have the honour to be, Sir,
THE GREYTOWN RIFLE CORPS.

Dr Featherston also behaved with very great bravery in the campaign on the west coast under Major-General Sir Trevor Chute in 1866, as is clearly shown in the following copy of a letter from the General to the Governor of New Zealand in 1873, recommending Dr Featherston for the decoration of the New Zealand Cross.

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, PALL MALL,
LONDON, *February 1st, 1873.*

To HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF NEW
ZEALAND.

SIR,

I deem it my duty to bring under the notice of your Excellency and Government the distin-

THE MAORI WAR

guished and valuable services rendered to the Colony during the campaign on the west coast of New Zealand in the early part of the year 1866 by Dr I. E. Featherston, late Superintendent of Wellington, and now Agent-General for the Colony in Great Britain.

I have the honour to state for your information that this officer, who volunteered to accompany me on the expedition and to take charge of the native allies, rendered me valuable and important assistance in every respect, and was on all occasions most conspicuous for his bravery and gallantry. He was present at the capture and destruction of the following pahs :—viz. Okotuku, Putahi, Otapawa, Ketemarae, and Waikoko, and accompanied me in the march round Mount Egmont. I venture to bring more particularly under the notice of your Excellency and Government the intrepid devotion of this officer to the public service on the occasion of the assault and capture of that almost impregnable stronghold, the Otapawa pah, the occupants of which were under the delusion that it could not be taken. The conspicuous gallantry displayed by this officer at the storming of that pah, in leading the native contingent into action, almost at the sacrifice of his own life, not only elicited my warmest approbation, but the admiration of the whole force present on that memorable occasion.

As I have already acknowledged in my dispatches

ACTION OF OTAPAWA

the eminent services rendered to me by Dr Featherston throughout the campaign, I now consider it my imperative duty to recommend this officer in the strongest terms for the distinctive decoration of the New Zealand Cross, in recognition of his meritorious and intrepid services during the period referred to, and more particularly at the storming and capture of that formidable pah, Otapawa, where I must in truth say Dr Featherston so exposed himself in the service of his Queen and country as to become, as it were, a target for the enemy's fire, thus, by his noble example, stimulating the courage of the native allies. I deem it my duty to make this recommendation under Clause 5 of the regulations ordained in that behalf by Order in Council, dated March 10th, 1869, and published in the *New Zealand Gazette* of March 11th, 1869 (No. 14).

I have the honour to be, etc.,

TREVOR CHUTE.

I must here mention that I went to the camp the day after the action of Otapawa to see General Chute, and I heard that Dr Featherston led the natives into action at Otapawa in his dressing-gown, with a cigar in his mouth, having no weapon whatever with which to defend himself.

THE MAORI WAR

I think I have now proved that the late Dr Featherston was in every sense of the word a truly courageous man, and that no history of the New Zealand war would be complete without his gallant services being prominently mentioned; and I yet hope to see the day when a suitable statue will be erected in the city of Wellington to his memory. I have not attempted to deal here with his political life, excepting where it led to his carrying out military measures; but his purely political life, extending over a period of a great many years, deserves, if possible, a greater amount of praise; in fact, you may say nearly his whole life was most unselfishly devoted for the sole benefit of his adopted country, and if he had a fault, it was the absolute neglect of his private concerns for the sake of his public duties—a brilliant example for our public men of the present day, not followed. He was acknowledged to be one of the most honourable and powerful politicians New Zealand ever had, and though he was only once for a short

FIRST AGENT-GENERAL

time a Cabinet Minister, he was always consulted by all Ministries, and was looked upon as a great power behind the throne. He ended his brilliant career as New Zealand's first Agent-General in London, which position he held at the time of his death.

CHAPTER VIII

THANKLESS OFFICE OF A DEFENCE MINISTER

IN July, 1865 I was sent to Wanganui to proceed to Pipiriki with Major Rookes, commanding the Wanganui district, and another officer, to inquire into the mutinous conduct of a portion of the force stationed at Pipiriki. On my arrival at Wanganui, the natives at Wereroa were causing so much anxiety that Major Rookes dared not leave the district; so I went to Pipiriki as President of the Court, accompanied by Major Nixon and Captain H. I. Jones of the Wanganui Militia as members. The trip up to Pipiriki, sixty-five miles up the Wanganui river, in canoes manned by Maoris was most enjoyable. On our arrival there, we carried out our duties,

ATTACK ON PIPIRIKI

and the men whose conduct we inquired into were detained as prisoners, pending the decision of Government as to their disposal. When we were at Pipiriki Major Brassey, commanding the outpost, had no reason to expect an immediate attack from the enemy, but we had not left Pipiriki more than three hours when the natives completely surrounded that outpost, and a force had to be sent up from Wanganui to relieve it.

It is an ill wind that blows no one any good. This attack by the enemy was a most fortunate thing for the prisoners into whose conduct we were sent to inquire, as they had to be released to defend the outpost, and consequently no notice was taken of their misbehaviour, which otherwise would have ended very seriously for them.

In September, 1865 I was sent up on special service to Wanganui to inquire into, and report upon, what was considered excessive military expenditure, and I was subsequently left in command of the district with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

THE MAORI WAR

In October, 1865 a change of Ministry took place, and the Honourable Colonel Haultain succeeded the Honourable Major Atkinson (afterwards Sir Harry Atkinson) as Defence Minister.

Sir Harry Atkinson was another of New Zealand's great men, both as a soldier and politician. As a captain of the Taranaki Bush Rangers, he showed great personal pluck, and proved himself a commander thoroughly to be relied upon. My regiment, the 57th, were always glad when that corps accompanied them on their expeditions. As a politician he was eminently successful, rising to the position of Premier, which position he held for a long period.

It was, however, upon the Honourable Colonel Haultain that the brunt of the war conducted by the Colonial Government fell, and the difficulties he had to contend against, were exceptionally great. It was at this time the Imperial troops were withdrawn from the Colony, and we had solely to depend upon our Colonial Army ; and in 1868, when war broke out again,

COLONEL HAULTAIN

corps had to be formed from a class of men that were not amenable to discipline, and who required exceptionally good officers to control them ; and such officers were hard to obtain.

We were fortunate in having at the head of the Defence department, a man of Colonel Haultain's experience and character. He expected all to do their duty, and appreciated every one who did. His word was his bond, and you felt perfectly certain if you did your duty, never mind whether it was popular or not, that your chief was bound to support you. Nobody except those who were working with Colonel Haultain, has any idea of the exceptionally harassing work, and heavy responsibilities he had to contend with, and no man in the Colony received less thanks than he did.

I remained in command of the Wanganui Militia district from September, 1865 to the end of March, 1869, and it was during that period that the war on the west coast, under control of the Colonial Government, took place, and in addition to my duties as

THE MAORI WAR

commander of the district, I had the equipping and feeding of the Colonial troops on the west coast, thrown upon my hands. There was, in those days, no telegraphic communication with Wellington, the seat of Government, and mails came only three times a week overland, and, as opportunity offered, by steamer. I had, therefore, in many cases to act entirely on my own responsibility, but under such a chief as Colonel Haultain, it was a pleasure ; because you felt that, so long as you did your best, your work would be appreciated, and you would be supported. My next chapter will contain the difficulties that a commander had, in those days, to encounter.

CHAPTER IX

DIFFICULTIES FROM WANT OF DISCIPLINE

HAVING received a letter from Colonel Haultain, informing me of his great anxiety about the lives of the survey party at work in the Patea district, and instructing me, in consequence of this, that, should the troops he had ordered from Opotiki to Patea come to Wanganui, I was to send the S. S. *Sturt*, conveying them at once to Patea forty miles north of Wanganui, without a moment's delay, I was naturally anxious to see that his instructions to me were carried out. Unfortunately the bar was too rough at Patea, and the steamer with the troops came to Wanganui. I requested Captain Fairchild to anchor in the stream, which he did; but, unfortunately, later on he

THE MAORI WAR

had to come to the wharf to coal, and it was impossible for him to negotiate the Patea bar till the next day. The steamer was ordered to sail next day at 10 a. m., and, in spite of my precautions, I found a great many men on shore without leave. The men according to their terms of enlistment, if they served their time and were of good character, got land given to them; and my threatening to take away their land, if they did not immediately embark, had the effect of getting all on board, with the exception of about half a dozen.

To my horror in the afternoon the steamer returned with the men, the bar at Patea being still too rough to venture to cross it. Knowing how important it was that they should get to the Patea district, I therefore had to order the men to march overland next day. On parading the men, I saw some of them were not obeying the command of their officer, so I personally took command of the parade, and warned the men that those who did

MUTINY

not obey my command, I should disband on the spot, and they would lose their land. Four men at first never moved at my word of command, and I took their arms from them, there and then. Encouraged by some loafers in the street, more men refused to march, surrounding me and raising their rifles to strike me, using the most insulting language. My sergeant-major, and quartermaster-sergeant by my orders, took the arms at once from the men, the affair resulting in my disbanding forty-two for mutiny, and they in consequence lost their land. The only reason for their behaving in this extraordinary manner was their desire to remain in Wanganui, as they had been on board the steamer for three or four days. Though the loss of forty-two men was serious at that time, it soon brought the remainder of the men to their senses, and I had no trouble with them ; and as luck would have it, they were in time at Patea to prevent any disaster.

On another occasion, some time later on, when it was found necessary to reinforce

THE MAORI WAR

the field force at Patea, to enable Lieutenant-Colonel McDonell to carry out certain operations, new corps were raised, and sent up to Wanganui, from various parts of the colony, and I was compelled from want of camp equipage to billet the men in the different hotels. One detachment of apparently steady men, I shipped on the S. S. *Woodpecker* for Patea, and to my disgust I found them on shore again just as the steamer was starting, as they had been taken to a hotel by their own officer to have a drink. They were marched on board again and sent to sea, and in the middle of the night Lieutenant Gudgeon, an officer of the native contingent, reported to me the S. S. *Woodpecker* was back, as the officer had broached some of the cargo, that he and some of the men were drunk, and that the captain was afraid to go on and had returned to the river.

I immediately went down, and found such was really the case, so I handed over the officer to the civil police, who put him in gaol on a charge of broaching

LACK OF DISCIPLINE

cargo on the high seas ; and I disbanded the six or seven men, who had assisted him in doing so, and sent the vessel at once to sea with the remainder of the detachment, placing Lieutenant Gudgeon in command. The officer was dismissed from the service, but the captain of the vessel was induced not to appear and give evidence in court, as to the broaching of cargo, and he was thus saved a term of imprisonment which he richly deserved.

The great fault of the Colonial Army at this period was lack of discipline, really from the want of experience, in most cases, of those who commanded the men. The stricter a commanding officer is, as long as he is just and looks after the interests of his men, the better the men appreciate it, and they quickly become amenable to discipline. I had, a short time before this, a very practical illustration of this fact. The Honourable J. C. Richmond then Native Minister acting for Colonel Haultain, paid my office a visit in Wanganui, and said that I must go up at

THE MAORI WAR

once and take command of the Patea district for a month, as he had just come from there and had found the camp at Waihi, then the frontier outpost, which was at any moment liable to an attack, in a most deplorable state of discipline, both officers and men being constantly drunk.

I went up to take command, and what did I find? I found the camp at Waihi, garrisoned by one hundred and seventy men, keeping three canteens going, which apparently were open at all hours, and without any canteen regulations. This at once accounted for the drunkenness in the camp. I immediately devoted my attention to the cause. I took the precaution first of sending the Adjutant round to each officer, so that I might catch none unawares, to warn them that the first officer I found under the influence of liquor would lose his commission and his land. I then visited the different canteens. A canteen, which is supposed to keep in stock every thing a soldier is likely to require, when kept under proper regulations is a necessary

THE CANTEENS

institution for the men, as they are able to secure at reasonable prices the various articles they need; and there is always a check kept to prevent the men's obtaining more liquor than is good for them; but in the case of these canteens, I found that the first I inspected, kept no stores for the men, nothing but liquor.

The next I visited was practically no better, having only two pairs of boots in stock, but plenty of liquor. I closed both of them at once, warning the two canteen keepers that if they sold a drop of liquor to the men, I would send a file of the guard into their canteens, knock in the bung of every cask, and let the liquor run into the creek. I told them that, later on, they would have a chance of tendering, as I only intended to allow one canteen, and that only under my regulations.

The last canteen inspected had a good supply of stores, in addition to liquor, but for sale at exorbitant rates. I allowed the proprietor, on his reducing his prices at once 20 per cent., which he willingly did,

THE MAORI WAR

to keep open for three days under my regulations, telling him that I was calling for tenders on the third day for one canteen only, and that, if the prices in those tenders were not at least as low as those to which he had just consented to reduce his goods, I would open a Government canteen, and devote the profits to a library for the men.

I at once issued canteen regulations, to be posted up in the canteen, authorising such to be kept open at certain hours, during which time a non-commissioned officer would attend to see that no man was allowed to take more liquor than was good for him, and giving warning that, if the men were allowed to get drunk at the canteen, the non-commissioned officer would be tried by court-martial, and the canteen would be permanently closed. What was the result? I had not a single case of drunkenness brought before me, either among the officers or the men, during the month I held the command.

A prohibitionist would have argued, this

COLONEL WHITMORE

is a case where I ought at once to have closed all the canteens. Had I done so, I am confident I should have had liquor brought into camp surreptitiously, and drunkenness among the men, necessitating severe punishments; whereas by the system I adopted, men took their liquor in moderation, were able to get the sundry stores they required at reasonable rates, consequently were contented, and amenable to discipline.

Later on, after our Colonial troops had met with reverses on the west coast, Colonel Whitmore (now Major-General Sir G. Whitmore) took over the command of the troops there. Under him discipline began to improve; but he had to meet a victorious army under Titokowaru, who had set his mind on attacking the town of Wanganui, and succeeded so far as to compel our troops to retire to within a few miles of that town.

Colonel Whitmore had at this period, attached to his army, a considerable force of Native Militia, called Kupapas, who

THE MAORI WAR

were very keen and impatient to give battle; but he was anxious to delay action until a reinforcement, daily expected from Auckland, should arrive, and he instructed me to send them on without fail and without a moment's delay, directly the steamer came in. The steamer arrived about ten o'clock one morning, bringing a very fine body of men of the armed constabulary from Waikato, under the command of Sub-Inspector Roberts (now Lieutenant-Colonel Roberts).

Knowing the very great anxiety of Colonel Whitmore, and how important it was that he should receive this reinforcement as soon as possible, I gave them two hours after their arrival at the wharf, to enable the officers to obtain anything they required for their men, and I issued instructions for the force to receive an early dinner, and directed Sub-Inspector Roberts to march immediately afterwards and join Colonel Whitmore. I sent an extra day's rations, and extra transport with them, so that

ACTION OF MOTUROA

they might march in as light order as possible, and thus be more fit to meet the enemy. I also sent my Adjutant, Captain Noake (now Lieutenant-Colonel Noake), with a dispatch to Colonel Whitmore, advising him of these reinforcements being *en route* to him. Their arrival was most opportune, as Colonel Whitmore was compelled to fight the action of Moturoa, where he found the enemy in such a strong position that he had to withdraw after heavy loss ; and it was this reinforcement, under the able command of Sub-Inspector Roberts, that so brilliantly covered his retreat and prevented a disaster.

The *Wanganui Chronicle*, a local paper, wrote a very severe article against me on this occasion, for sending these men so peremptorily to the front, saying that I did so without allowing the men time to have any dinner before marching, and that in my address to the men, I told them they were going to God and to glory ; in short making me out a veritable tyrant ; so much so that, not only was it taken up by the

THE MAORI WAR

New Zealand Press, but it appeared in a Sydney paper, and a brother of mine, who was living in N. S. Wales at the time, wrote and asked me what on earth I was doing, as I was looked upon as a tyrant.

As a matter of fact, I specially ordered this reinforcement to have an early dinner, and afterwards paraded the men, inspected them, and asked if there were any complaints, when one man complained that he had had no dinner. On my further inquiry, the senior sergeant replied: 'The men were warned for dinner, and had it; and, if this man went without, it was his own fault.' I then told the complainant he need not mind, as I had sent an extra day's rations on the carts for the men. I afterwards addressed the men as follows:— 'Men, I am sorry to have to send you away directly you come in from your sea voyage, but Colonel Whitmore is anxiously looking for you, and may be fighting this minute, urgently wanting your assistance, and if you are as good as you look, Colonel Whitmore is a fortunate man to get you.'

ABUSE BY THE PRESS

As it turned out, they were as good as they looked, and he was a fortunate man to get them.

The Press was most unfair to me on that occasion; I made a point of never taking any notice of their comments, but treated them with the contempt they generally deserved.

I do not think there was any man in New Zealand more abused in the Press than I was at this period, but luckily I was serving under a Minister who knew how to treat information received in that manner; in fact, among the numerous letters I received from him, he once made the following remark:—‘I see you are well abused by the Press; that is a sure sign you are doing your duty.’

On the other hand, great injury is done to individuals by the gross attacks sometimes made by the Press upon unreliable information. Lieutenant-Colonel Lyon was appointed second in command of the field-force under Colonel Whitmore. He was a very brave soldier, and had formerly been

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an officer in the Coldstream Guards and the old 92nd (Gordon Highlanders), and saw some active service in New Zealand.

I must, to substantiate what I have written about the Press, give here an extract from a private letter he wrote to me, when I left the field-force.

My dread in coming to Wanganui was much more of you. I had heard and *read* so much of you, that I expected to find a perfect fiend in human form, but I must say I was *most agreeably disappointed*, as there was no one who gave me more assistance than yourself, in steering through troubled waters.

It will be seen that I certainly have to thank the Press for Colonel Lyon's first opinion of me.

The Imperial troops at this time, with the exception of the 2nd battalion, 18th Royal Irish, had been withdrawn from the Colony, and we had to face the enemy with our Colonial troops, including the Militia and Volunteers. The Press tried to exercise such power over those who were compelled to serve in the Militia, that it

MISREPRESENTATION

made it difficult for a commanding officer of a district to maintain his authority.

In the next chapter will be seen what stringent measures I had to adopt with one portion of the local Press, in order to thoroughly establish my authority as Commander of the district, which I effectually did.

CHAPTER X

STRINGENT MEASURES : MR BALLANCE, EDITOR OF *Wanganui Herald*, PUT IN GAOL

IT was at this period that we had to depend entirely upon the Militia and Volunteers for the defence of the town of Wanganui, and it was then, as officer commanding the Wanganui district, that I had a great difficulty to contend with, caused by the action of a portion of the local press.

The late Honourable John Ballance at that time was editor of the *Wanganui Herald* and a very bitter opponent of the Government of the day, so much so that he tried to exercise his power, as editor, to in every way thwart my authority as Commanding Officer of the district ; and he went so far in his paper, as to call upon the militiamen I had

STRINGENT MEASURES

ordered to parade, not to obey me, informing them that I had no troops at my command to enforce my orders. This was a very serious matter, more especially as it took place actually when Titokowaru's advance guard was seen within twenty-five miles of Wanganui, and Colonel Haultain, being afraid Titokowaru might get in between Colonel Whitmore's force and the town of Wanganui, ordered me to call out the Wanganui Militia at once for actual service.

The Militia Act of 1858, in force at this time, compelled me to serve each militiaman with a notice, calling him out for actual service, whereas, if I could get them out on parade without it, a notice given on a parade, would have the same effect. To serve the notice individually with my then staff, a sergeant-major and quartermaster-sergeant, was unworkable, so instead of serving the notices, I issued a proclamation calling the Militia out for actual service, and ordering parades of each company.

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Mr Ballance saw his opportunity, and called the notice of the public in his paper to my illegal act, although the enemy was so close to Wanganui ; and he recommended the men not to turn out. The result was that some did, and some did not, Mr Ballance being among the latter.

Mr Walter Buller (now Sir Walter Buller) was Resident Magistrate at the time, and he came to my office and cautioned me that my proclamation was not in terms of the Act. I replied : ' I know it, but the Act is unworkable, and I am going to carry out the proclamation,' and I asked him to lend me a cell in his prison, and one of the constables, which he did. I immediately put in orders, the cell as a military guard-room, and the constable as the military guard of it.

I sent Mr Ballance a personal notice, calling him out for actual service, and ordered him to attend a parade on a given date, and attended that parade myself, and found him absent. I then wrote for an immediate explanation and received a

MR BALLANCE

most insubordinate reply. I ordered him to at once attend at the orderly room, which he did, and I asked him his reason for his absence from the first parade; when he replied that I did not serve him with a notice in terms of the Act.

I said: 'You have the law on your side, but not much honour; it is shameful to think that, with the enemy so close to the town, you did not, when called upon, at once turn out to defend your home. You were absent from parade a second time, and that too, after you received the notice from me in terms of the Act; what have you to say to that? He replied that he was present. I said: 'That is not the case; I was present on the parade, myself, when the roll was called, and you were absent. However, these are matters of secondary consideration compared to the most insubordinate letter I have received from you,' and I asked him if he was the writer of that letter. On his replying in the affirmative, I said: 'Unless you at once withdraw that letter,

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and apologise to me, as your commanding officer, for having written it, I will send you to the guard-room, and try you by court-martial,' and as he did not withdraw the letter, I sent him to the guard-room accordingly, and told him I should try him by court-martial. This caused great excitement in the town, and the evening paper of which Mr Ballance was editor, headed its leader in the largest type: 'Military Tyranny : Editor in Gaol.'

The next morning, instead of parading Mr Ballance at the orderly room in the usual way, I went up to the gaol to warn him for his court-martial ; but, seeing he hardly realised his position, and not wishing to take these extreme measures, if, with due regard to my position, it could be avoided, I thought I would give him another chance of withdrawing the letter. He then, finding that there was nothing for him but imprisonment, apologised to me, in front of the officers I took with me, for having written the letter. I then let him out of gaol, remarking that he

ACTION OF MILITIA

never would have been put in, had he withdrawn the letter at first, and warning him that I meant that I, and not he, was to command the district, and that I would have my orders implicitly obeyed.

The result was that, in spite of Mr Ballance having said in his paper, the evening of his discharge from gaol, that I let him out because I was afraid of him, the settlers knew such was not the case, and they turned out for parade without any further trouble. Shortly afterwards, I had to send a detachment out to garrison the Wereroa Redoubt, which was attacked by the advance guard of Titokowaru, the Militia gallantly defending their redoubt, and driving the enemy off.

Mr Ballance afterwards became a member of the House of Representatives, and subsequently Premier of the Colony, which office he held at the time of his death. I must in justice to Mr Ballance say that, after a short time, he showed no ill-feeling whatever against me, and we were always on friendly terms.

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Such is the true version of this story, very different from that published in Gudgeon's 'Heroes of New Zealand' in his remarks *re* Mr Ballance, and from the Right Honourable R. Seddon's speech in the House of Representatives, when referring to this subject.

CHAPTER XI

FALSE ALARM—IMPERIAL TROOPS UNDER SELF-RELIANT POLICY COULD NOT ACT

AT the commencement of the last chapter I mentioned that we had to depend for the defence of Wanganui entirely upon the Militia and volunteers, although there was a detachment of the 2nd Battalion 18th Regiment, under the command of Captain Dawson, stationed in the barracks at Wanganui at the time. This was the only regiment left in the Colony, and it was distributed in detachments at a few of the towns. The instructions their commanders received were, that they were on no account to send their men into the field, but simply to defend the towns at which they were stationed if actually attacked; that the Colonial troops were to do the work. The

THE MAORI WAR

absurdity of this was plainly visible when a false alarm occurred in Wanganui under the following circumstances :—

Colonel Whitmore with his field force was about twenty-five miles from Wanganui, and the enemy to reach Wanganui, would have had to pass Colonel Whitmore's troops, which certainly might have been done by the enemy's making a flank movement through the dense bush. The inhabitants of Wanganui felt they were in an insecure state, and to inspire confidence I fixed upon suitable positions to post my pickets in case of alarm, and in addition, sent out cavalry patrols to patrol the country between the different lines of roads outside the town. I felt sure myself, from information in my possession, there was no immediate cause for alarm ; but these precautions gave confidence.

About one o'clock one morning I was awakened by a sharp knocking at my front door, and found Captain Finnimore, who commanded the Wanganui cavalry, waiting

FALSE ALARM

anxiously to see me. He said: 'Titokowaru's men are at Gotty's farm (about three miles from Wanganui), and I am sure Gotty and all his family by this time are murdered, as I myself heard the Maoris yelling there.' I said: 'Nonsense! it cannot be true.' He replied: 'The patrol (of which the late Mr Ballance happened to be one) came and reported to me that they had ridden up to Gotty's farm, and distinctly heard the Maoris yelling there, and there appeared to be a large number. Before coming to report to you, I rode out to where the patrol was, and distinctly heard the Maoris yelling myself.'

The Honourable Colonel Haultain, the Defence Minister, happened to be in Wanganui. I immediately reported the circumstance to him, sending my sergeant-major round to at once warn a picket for duty, without alarming the town. I informed Colonel Haultain that I was sending out a picket to a position I had already selected, which would defend an attack from Gotty's valley, and that I

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was going myself at once to Gotty's farm to see what was really the matter.

As I was living with my wife and family in the outskirts of the town, and in a direct line for Gotty's farm, and my duties would not allow me to attend to them, I sent a conveyance to bring them into the town, and went myself with two troopers of the Wanganui Cavalry to Gotty's farm. We had to ride up rather a steep gully, with bush on each side, which was done at a gallop, each of us having a loaded revolver in our hands. Directly I arrived there I saw it was a false alarm, as the sheep were quietly grazing around the house. It was moonlight, and on my calling out, Mrs Gotty (Mr Gotty being absent from home) was exceedingly astonished to see, on putting her head out of an upstairs window, three mounted men with revolvers in their hands. I then told her why I had come, and asked if any Maoris had been there. At first she said, 'No,' then it suddenly dawned upon her. 'Yes,' she said, 'Maori shearers are here; were very

PICKET PRACTICE

drunk, and have been yelling out.' This accounted for what the cavalry patrol heard, and shows what a simple thing often causes an alarm, when in the neighbourhood of an enemy.

I went back at once to Wanganui, hoping to reach the town before any alarm had been given; but unfortunately the report soon spread, and I found many taking their families to the barracks for safety; the minds of these, however, I speedily relieved.

The detachment of the 18th Regiment did not move out of the barracks, but awaited events, and Captain Dawson told me he felt horribly disgusted he was not allowed to send out an advance picket, when the news first came in, but his instructions were most explicit.

This false alarm was an excellent practice for my picket, which was duly posted under the command of Lieutenant W. F. Russell, Wanganui Militia; but had there been real cause for alarm, and an attack made on the town, what an exceedingly

THE MAORI WAR

false and cruel position it was to place any Imperial troops in. Under such circumstances, their duty, in spite of the self-reliant policy, ought to have been, immediately on the first alarm, to send out the advance picket, to bear the brunt of the attack, instead of allowing, as would have been the case, this to be done by untrained militiamen, who were sent to the most advanced post. Lucky indeed it was a false alarm.

The Wereroa redoubt, which was for a few weeks held by the Wanganui Militia, was evacuated by Colonel Whitmore, and all the commissariat stores were destroyed; and our troops gradually retired to Westmere, a few miles from Wanganui. Until January, 1869, when Colonel Whitmore returned from the east coast, whither, a short time before, he had been sent with a force on account of the Poverty Bay massacre, no further real advance on the west coast was made; but the district, in the interim, was well defended by the Colonial troops, the Kai-Iwi Cavalry, under

BRYCE v. RUSDEN

Lieutenant Bryce (subsequently Native Minister), doing good service.

It was during this interim that the skirmish took place, which led to the most unjustifiable and cruel personal attack against Lieutenant Bryce, by Mr Rusden in his work on New Zealand, which resulted in the historical libel action of Bryce *v.* Rusden, tried in London under Baron Huddleston, where the jury, after retiring fifteen minutes, found a verdict for the Honourable John Bryce with £5000 damages.

The Honourable John Bryce, who was Native Minister in the late Sir Harry Atkinson's Ministry, is another of New Zealand's good men; and he was of all men the last that should have been attacked in this manner, as he was exceptionally straightforward in all his doings, and would have been the first man to put down anything approaching to unfairness or cruelty in war.

The Parihaka bloodless campaign of 1881 redounds immensely to his credit, for the

THE MAORI WAR

natives under Te Whiti, a Maori prophet possessing great influence, had assembled in large numbers, with the fighting chiefs, Titokowaru and Tohu, at Parihaka on the west coast, and were determined to retake the confiscated lands, which had been allotted to the settlers, and they went so far as to commence ploughing up their land. The expeditious gathering together of a considerable force of armed constabulary and Volunteer Corps from various parts of the Colony, by the Honourable John Bryce, under his personal superintendence, so overwhelmed Te Whiti, that Titokowaru, Tohu, and Te Whiti, surrendered without a shot being fired, and were taken prisoners for unlawfully assembling.

I consider the tactics shown here are as good as anything which has been done in New Zealand ; and the fact of this being a bloodless campaign is all the more to Mr Bryce's credit, it being entirely due to the very prompt measures taken by him ; for the natives were so surprised by such a large force suddenly surrounding

PROMPT MEASURES

them, that they saw that their attempting to rebel was useless, and gave in. Had half-measures been taken, the result would, without doubt, have been war, carrying with it a considerable loss of life and treasure.

CHAPTER XII

NEW SYSTEM OF FEEDING TROOPS IN FIELD SUCCESSFULLY TRIED

IN 1868 I was ordered to undertake, in addition to my duties as Commander of the Wanganui Militia district, the equipping and feeding of the Colonial troops on the west coast, in other words ; to establish a commissariat department.

This was at the time of the withdrawal of the Imperial troops, and just before the commencement of the war with Titokowaru. Though the system adopted by the Imperial commissariat for feeding troops in the field was successful so far as the actual rationing of the men was concerned, yet from what I heard and saw, I found sufficient to satisfy myself that there was a wanton and disgraceful waste of stores,

GOVERNMENT STORES

the loss of which fell upon the country, and that the cost of the rations—one shilling and eightpence per man—was a great deal more than it would be under a system of contract, which, moreover, would entail on the Government no risk of loss, or of this waste, and would, besides, do away with the opportunity for bribery and corruption, of which, I am afraid, advantage was taken.

My experience is that, in all countries, the Government stores are treated with feeling, ‘they only belong to the Government,’ and what becomes of them is a matter of little moment to any one. In some cases, the check over them is a little more stringent than others; in many, the losses are covered by Courts of Inquiry. Cash, very properly, must always be accounted for to the uttermost farthing, and an audit department is always maintained to see that this is carried out; and yet, curiously enough, the moment cash leaves the right hand and is converted into stores in the left, that severe and proper

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check ceases, and what becomes of the stores in many cases is left to chance; and hence, great loss.

No one could have had better means of ascertaining this than I had from my experience as Inspector of Stores of the Colony, first military only, then civil and military, from 1869 to 1878, when I instituted a system, whereby every article of stores both civil and military, purchased with public money was traced to a store account, and thereafter accounted for to me as Inspector of Stores. I could give very substantial proofs of my assertion, but that is going away from the subject of this book. I shall not say more than that, on one occasion, when making my first inspection of a store, I found about 150,000 feet of timber in a yard, not a foot of which was kept account of, nor had been for years previous. The timber was in charge of a carpenter, whose pay was twelve shillings per diem. Curiously enough, not far from the timber yard this carpenter owned some land, on

THE COMMISSARIAT

which he had erected two good wooden dwelling houses—a wonderful saving out of twelve shillings per diem. I need hardly say the expenditure after this was strictly accounted for.

The Imperial commissariat purchased in bulk, and issued rations therefrom in detail, therefore ran the risk of all damage to stores in transit, and had to keep up a large transport service; further, being Government stores, they were not treated with the care that would have been employed if they had belonged to a private individual. In consequence of this, I determined to try the following system:—

I called for tenders for supplying a full ration to the troops in the field, wherever they were, within a radius of twenty miles from a given centre; that centre to be the head-quarters of the contractor, at which he had to keep a month's supply of rations for the whole force, subject to my inspection at any time; failure in maintaining this amount to entail a fine of a thousand pounds, and two capable sureties had to

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enter into a bond for that amount. I had to find the escort for the contractor's men, when I considered such was required.

In January, 1869 Colonel Whitmore took the field with a force of 1200 men, which were at times subdivided into five or six different camps, according to the nature of his operations. I accompanied the field force for nearly three months, performing the duties of Acting Quartermaster-General, and rationed the force under this new system. Nothing could have answered better; the troops were always well fed, they were never a day short of rations, and whenever the force was detained more than a couple of days, the contractor had to put up ovens and bake bread for the men; and more than once I had baker's bread packed to the men while they were fighting in the bush. All the staff I had for this force, was a quartermaster, an assistant-quartermaster, and an issuer for each camp.

The issuers' duties were to receive from the contractor the rations for their respective

RATION CONTRACT

camps (three days' supply at a time), and issue them daily to the men, and to take charge of ammunition and other stores required for the use of the force in their camps. By this system the transport was greatly reduced, and I was able with seventeen two-horse teams to carry all the ammunition and camp equipage for this force. The contract price paid for that was fifteen shillings per diem, for each two-horse team, driver included, they finding themselves in rations and forage ; and I had the right of using these transport horses, when required, for packing the rations to the men in the bush. The ration contractor by this system bore all the burden and expense of carting the rations, and driving the live stock with the army ; and any loss or waste fell upon him. The cost of this ration to the Government, was in the first district, one shilling and four pence per man, as compared with one shilling and eight pence, the cost of the ration under the Imperial commissariat.

The contract in the second district was

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even lower, being, if I remember rightly, only tenpence per ration ; but this was on account of the contractor in that district being given the sole right of keeping the canteens at the different camps, when stationary. The men at that time were charged one shilling and sixpence per day for their rations, so the real cost to the country was less than the rates just quoted. When, however, later on, the force went into the interior of the island, the cost of feeding the troops was much more expensive, but the men were only charged the same rate. Another great advantage of this system was that I was enabled, four days after the end of each month, to send to the audit office, complete returns of the receipt and expenditure of the rations of the whole force ; and no rations were ever lost.

Of course, this system can only be carried out advantageously when in fairly settled districts. In the interior, where no settlers resided, the system in use by the Imperial commissariat had to be resorted to.

CHECK ON CONTRACTORS

I had to be most particular that the contractors always kept the full amount of reserve at the head-quarters of each district. In one instance I found such was not done, and I gave twelve hours' notice to have the stock complete, under a penalty of one thousand pounds. The stock was completed, and I had no trouble ever after. All contractors want thoroughly looking after, never mind who they are. I remember, before starting this system, when stores were procured in bulk, that, among other stores, I had to send seven hogsheads of rum to the front, five per cent. under proof. I had previously received a complaint that the rum supplied appeared weak. On this occasion, when these seven hogsheads were ready for shipment, I tested every one and found them twelve per cent. under proof; I ordered all to be rectified before being shipped, which it took the contractor five hours to do, and I tested them again. This contractor had supplied thousands of gallons to the Imperial troops, and the man in

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charge said, never before had he had his liquor tested. If such was the case (which I doubt), and if he treated the Imperial department as he tried to treat me, the contractor made a nice cheque by selling water as rum.

Below, I give an extract from the dispatch sent by Colonel Whitmore to the Government, after the attack on Taurangaika on February 3rd, 1869. Though the pah was abandoned during the night, still, the difficulties of feeding the army were the same ; and it will be seen that Colonel Whitmore's dispatch gives exceptional credit to the department in that respect, proving in his opinion that the system of rationing the troops by contract, was a decided success.

Extract from letter from Colonel Whitmore to the Honourable Colonel Haultain, dated Titokowaru's Pah, Taurangaika.

February 3rd, 1869.

As there has been no real or, rather, serious fighting, I think it out of place to mention individuals, and therefore confine myself to ac-

LETTER OF COL. WHITMORE

knowledging the cheerful co-operation I have met with from all ranks and corps throughout my operations. Lieutenant-Colonel Gorton, however, whose particular duties are not altered by the resistance of the enemy, does deserve that I should specially record the great assistance I have derived from his zealous personal exertions and excellent arrangements.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TAKING OF TAURANGAIKA PAH AND FURTHER MOVEMENTS

IT was most fortunate for our force that the natives did evacuate Taurangaika pah. It was simply astonishing to see the amount of work which had been done by Titokowaru's men, numbering about six hundred, in less than ten weeks, to fortify their position. The pah covered about an acre of ground, and was situated on a hill outside, but close to the bush. Under-ground passages and rooms were dug out, so that their men were entirely protected from our shells ; and double palisading was erected around the whole, making the place so strong, that it is more than doubtful if we should have taken it by storm, had they remained to defend it ;

TAURANGAIKA PAH

we could certainly not have done so without considerable loss of life. With all their clever engineering, they left out the most important necessity—water ; they had to go outside to get it, and when they saw our force was sufficiently large to surround them, they decided to vacate the position, which they did in a very clever manner.

Our troops at about four o'clock p.m., took up a position about two hundred yards from the pah, in a ditch which protected them from the fire of the enemy. We were so close to each other that conversation in a loud voice was carried on between the enemy and ourselves, they calling out to us at eight o'clock at night, to come on and attack them, as they wanted to breakfast on us in the morning. At ten o'clock at night, they apparently made a greater noise than ever ; at the same time, their force was clearing out at the back into the bush ; and when, at break of day, our troops rushed the position, they found an empty pah. I went in myself to examine

THE MAORI WAR

it, and owing to the numerous little compartments leading one into another, had some difficulty in finding my way out again. Had Colonel Whitmore been able to surround the position and attack them when they came out for water, the result might have been different ; but his force was chiefly composed of men who had previously suffered reverses under Lieutenant-Colonel McDonell, and Colonel Whitmore had to move with great caution at first, until he felt he could thoroughly rely upon his men.

Colonel Whitmore as a commander was in many respects a success, and certainly the best we had during that period ; at the same time, it was very unfortunate that his manner at times was so offensive to his officers and his men, and also that he did not look better after the interests of his wounded. It was owing to this, that I had two serious altercations with him.

That he was thoroughly satisfied with the manner in which my department

RESULT OF ALTERCATION

carried out their duties, is unmistakably given in his dispatch of February 3rd, 1869, an extract from which already appears in this book; yet, within a week after that, though the department carried out implicitly the orders he gave as to the number of days' rations to be issued to certain troops, because that did not dovetail with his operations, he blamed the department for doing exactly what he instructed them to do; and spoke in such violent and offensive language to the assistant-quartermaster, that the latter came to me to complain, and said he wished to resign his appointment, which I would not hear of. On my taking the matter up, Colonel Whitmore again spoke in such an insulting manner to this officer that I felt it my duty to interfere, and on the evidence of his own A.D.C., I proved my quartermaster was perfectly right on the question at issue. It was very lamentable such an altercation did take place; the result, however, was good for the force, as his manner afterwards was decidedly better towards

THE MAORI WAR

them; but not for me, as will be hereafter shown.

At this time the head-quarters of the force were at Wereroa, a high hill commanding the Waitotara river, and a little event occurred, which, owing to bad luck, told against me.

An advance was ordered, and Colonel Whitmore gave instructions to put a pontoon bridge over the Waitotara, and to cross the guns, ammunition, and stores over the river by that means. This meant an unnecessary delay of several hours, as, by marching the men about four miles down the river, we could ford without any difficulty, and thus save the necessity of putting up the bridge. I pointed this out, but received orders to carry out the instructions given, which were issued accordingly, when Colonel Whitmore countermanded them, and told me that it was my work, that I was responsible, and was to do what I pleased.

I then carried out what I had suggested, and sent the guns, ammunition,

FAILURE OF PLAN

and stores, with a guard, to ford the river four miles lower down, early in the morning. The river was low, and there was no sign of rain, but during the night, though it did not rain in camp, it did far back in the hills, so much so that the river rose to a high flood, and though I waited for two days, I could not ford, and had to return to Wereroa, and carry out the orders originally given by Colonel Whitmore. His army was in front, separated from his ammunition and stores, and it exchanged a few shots with some of the rearguard of the enemy.

It was most unfortunate, and the colonel scored heavily against me; but it was still more unfortunate for the wounded at Patea, as a change in the hospital arrangements took place there, which I am confident never would have taken place had I been present; and I severely censured the principal medical officer, who rode out specially to tell me, for allowing such a change to be made without reference to the Government, even though the com-

THE MAORI WAR

mander of the troops had ordered it. The medical department was under my control, and I had to see that they received the necessary stores and medical comforts.

The Resident Magistrate's house at Patea, comprising several good-sized rooms, had been converted into a hospital, and several wounded were being attended to there, some of them being serious cases, and yet Colonel Whitmore, when he arrived at Patea, ordered the wounded to be moved into huts with sand floors, and took possession of this hospital as head-quarters for himself and his staff, I being one of the number.

I went immediately to Colonel Whitmore, and requested him to at once give up the building again to the wounded, but he refused, stating that he must have those quarters for H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, who was daily expected in New Zealand, and would visit the camp. I still remonstrated as strongly as I could, and said I felt sure that neither H.R.H. the Prince of Wales nor H.R.H. the Duke

REMOVAL OF WOUNDED

of Edinburgh would dream of turning the wounded out; that they could not remain where they were, with the sand blowing into their wounds while they were being dressed, and that, if he would not give in, I must turn the settlers out of their block-house, which had a wooden floor.

It ended in my having to do that. I went to see the wounded, and naturally they found great fault at the treatment they had received. Unfortunately I was away looking after the stores being crossed over the Waitotara; had I been present before the wounded were removed, awkward position as I should have been placed in to prevent it, I feel confident this would never have happened.

However, I suffered for the action I took, as will be shown later on. H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh did not come to New Zealand, as he was unfortunately fired at and wounded by O'Farrell in Sydney. After the enemy had evacuated Taurangaika, they fled across the Waitotara river; our troops expeditiously followed

THE MAORI WAR

them up in the bush, Colonel Whitmore eventually overtaking and surprising them at Otauto, where he fought his first engagement in this expedition, and routed the enemy. He sent his wounded to Patea, which ought to have had that good hospital to receive them. Colonel Whitmore followed up his success, scattering Titokowaru's force.

At Keteonatea he halted for a few days prior to attacking the natives at Te Ngaire, a place eight miles inland, surrounded by what was assumed to be an impregnable swamp, to which the larger portion of Titokowaru's army had fled. After that he determined to march his army, at the back of Mount Egmont, to Waitara, by the same route as Major-General Sir Trevor Chute so successfully took with the Imperial and native troops in 1866. The natives residing on the coast between Mount Egmont and the sea, at Kaipukenui, Warea, and Opunake, though not actually fighting against us, allowed no one to pass through their country, and stated they would fight

HONE PIHAMA

if any troops were sent that way, our only friend being Hone Pihama, a chief at Oeo who formerly had fought against us, and who a year or two before, had led the attack against General Cameron at Nukumaru, with such success that some of his men got into the camp and killed one of the cooks.

CHAPTER XIV

A RIDE THROUGH THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY

AT Keteonatea Colonel Whitmore told me of his intention to march his force at the back of Mount Egmont to Waitara, and asked me to go by steamer to New Plymouth from Patea, and arrange for rations to be sent to meet his men on the other side of Mount Egmont. I replied that there was no steamer available, either at Wanganui or Patea, which would enable me to get there in time, and the only way to do it was to go overland. The distance between Keteonatea and New Plymouth is about eighty miles, and, as before mentioned, the country, for the greater part of the way, was practically in the hands of the enemy, as, though the natives were not actually fighting against us, their sympathies were

THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY

entirely with those who were, and communications were frequent between them, more especially for the first ten miles, and no European had gone through this district during the six months previous, excepting Father Roland. Colonel Whitmore then said he would not order me to go by that route, though it was most essential that provisions should be sent for his troops from New Plymouth, but, if I decided to go, he would give me a troop of cavalry to escort me. This I declined, feeling certain that, with an escort, I should have to fight my way, and should not get to New Plymouth without considerable loss of life, and possibly might not get there at all. I felt it would be far safer and better for me to go with a couple of native guides. I was sure the hostile natives on the coast would go to Te Ngaire, inland, to help those there to defend themselves against the attack which they knew would be made directly against them, and that I should be able, with a couple of guides, to steal through the country unmolested. This I told Colonel Whitmore,

THE MAORI WAR

and he said I could go, but he would not order me, and that I did it on my own responsibility.

Lieutenant Gudgeon picked out two smart men from the native contingent—one, the son of the celebrated warrior Hapurona, who fought against us in Taranaki in 1861, the other, a man who had been a rebel six months before. I went to Lieutenant-Colonel Lyon, second in command, and Sub-Inspector Goring (both brave men) to bid them good-bye, and they begged me not to go, as they thought it madness to run such great personal risk; but I felt in my own mind that there was not such a great risk, as, on account of the pre-meditated attack on Te Ngaire, I should not see many natives. I therefore determined to go, and went.

I started from Keteonatea about ten o'clock a.m., with my two guides, who led the way about twenty-five yards in front, I riding behind on a favourite charger. After we had gone about a mile, one of the guides came back to me and demanded

NATIVE AMBUSCADES

my revolver, saying he had not got one, I remonstrated at his coming without a revolver, but it appeared he had never had one. He argued it was his duty to ride in front and defend me, and to see that we rode into no ambuscades. I thought his argument a very reasonable one, and gave him my revolver; this left me with only a sword to defend myself, but I relied, in case of trouble, more on the speed of my horse.

It was really a beautiful sight to see how these two natives scoured every gully, as they rode past at a hand canter, each with a loaded revolver in his hand, to make sure no ambuscade was laid. The natives when laying ambuscades in a fern country would sometimes put fern round their heads, and an inexperienced eye would never detect it; but these guides would notice any peculiar movement of the fern directly. After we had crossed the Wain-gongoro river, and had gone about eight miles, we came to Kaipukenui Pah, the residence of Wiremu Kingi, a very doubtful chief, so doubtful indeed, that the guides

THE MAORI WAR

would not let me go with them to the pah. I dismounted on the top of a hill, and gave my horse a spell, while the guides went to see Wiremu Kingi, and after a short time, I was glad to hear the welcome words, "Haere Mai," which mean, "Come on, you are welcome." Wiremu Kingi received me very well, and invited me to have something to eat, which I did.

After resting some little time, we rode on, accompanied by another native from this pah, and on reaching Oeo, I received a very cordial welcome from the chief, Hone Pihama, who, a few pages back I mentioned, was our friend. He told me that I was quite right in coming by the coast road, as the natives had gone inland to Te Ngaire as I anticipated, that we should have no difficulty in getting to New Plymouth, and that he would go with me. I then felt I was perfectly certain to succeed in my mission. He told me to leave one of my guides behind, which I did, and he came on with us, reaching Opunake at about seven o'clock p.m.

AT NEW PLYMOUTH

We remained the night at Opunake ; a large number of natives were there, who were more or less excited at my being in their pah in uniform, but at the same time, were very civil. After we had had some food, I amused the natives by showing them some tricks at cards, of which I knew a good many ; they were very sharp, and found me out in two, much to their delight. This little event had a wonderful effect ; they became most friendly, and I could not have been treated better.

The next morning we were up early, and I rode into New Plymouth with Hone Pihamā and my guide. The first man I met on reaching the town, whom I knew, was the late Sir Harry Atkinson, under whom I had served when he was Defence Minister. He was astonished to see me, and delighted that I had been successful in getting through. I called for immediate tenders for supplying with rations, the troops who were coming at the back of Mount Egmont, and the next morning at ten o'clock, I accepted the lowest tender,

THE MOARI WAR

and instructed Major Stapp, Adjutant of the Taranaki district, to send the rations out on a given date, returning at once to Keteonatea, riding the first day with Hone Pihama as far as Oeo, a distance of over sixty miles.

On the way back when passing through Warca, where the natives were considered more unfriendly than at any other settlement, we suddenly came upon a party of natives, men and women, carrying fruit and fish. I was the first man they saw, and their look of utter astonishment at the sight of an officer in uniform amused me very much. They put down what they were carrying, and threw up their arms, loudly calling out. I suppose that they at first thought our troops had come and taken their pah, but Hone Pihama soon eased their minds, and they became very friendly ; I dismounted and ate some of their apples, which I enjoyed.

We did not reach Oeo till late in the evening, and I was most anxious to hear if our troops had made an attack on Te

RETURN TO KETEONATEA

Ngaire, but no news had been received, and it was believed that the force was still at Keteonatea. I slept the night at Oeo, and the next day I thought I might venture a short cut through Te Ngutu-o-te-manu, the scene of two engagements some time before, but Hone Pihama would not hear of my doing so, as he feared that I should be shot; but by the coast, he felt sure, I should be perfectly safe, so I took the coast road, and arrived at the camp at Keteonatea at ten o'clock in the morning, reporting to Colonel Whitmore that the rations for his force would be at the back of the mountain where he required them on the day named.

I had only been lent to Colonel Whitmore to accompany his force for a few days, to organise the commissariat, transport, and medical departments, as I had previously been appointed Inspector of Defence Stores for the Colony. I, however, remained with him nearly three months, and after I returned to Keteonatea,

THE MAORI WAR

I left the force to take up my duties as Inspector of Defence Stores at Wellington.

It is not often that an officer gets the chance of doing good work outside his usual duties: my chance, I thought, came when I volunteered to do this essential work, and I felt in my own mind, I ought to have got some recognition of it. I think I should have, had I been in the Imperial service. I did not even get thanked; all Colonel Whitmore did, was to say in his dispatch: 'I dispatched Lieutenant-Colonel Gorton to-day to New Plymouth to enter into a contract for the supply of provisions in the Taranaki district.'

This was the manner in which I suffered for the disagreements I had with Colonel Whitmore, in which I contended for the benefit of my department and the wounded; but such is the luck of war. At any rate I have the satisfaction of feeling I conscientiously did my duty to my dear, noble Queen and country.

CHAPTER XV

FINAL RESULTS OF THE EXPEDITION ON THE WEST COAST

IMMEDIATELY after I left Keteonatea for Wellington, Colonel Whitmore attacked the natives at Te Ngaire, which was surrounded by an almost impregnable swamp ; he succeeded in getting his force through it, and surprising the enemy in the early morning, and, I was informed, would undoubtedly have captured the great warrior, Titokowaru, had it not been for the action of some of the Wanganui natives (our allies), who ran into our native camp declaring that the occupants of Te Ngaire were friendly people, and before this was discovered to be a ruse, Titokowaru and his followers escaped, and fled far inland

THE MAORI WAR

of Taranaki to the upper Waitara. This was very unfortunate, and the only explanation I can give of our friendly natives behaving then in such an extraordinary manner is, that some of them were nearly related to Titokowaru's men.

Colonel Whitmore marched his force at the back of Mount Egmont to Waitara, but saw nothing of the enemy, and from Waitara embarked his force for Auckland, *en route* for the east coast, where operations under his command were afterwards carried on against Te Kooti.

The effect of this expedition on the west coast was very good. Titokowaru's force, by being followed up so energetically and never allowed any rest, was so broken up that they dispersed, and fled up the different rivers as they retired up the coast. It was, however, later on found necessary to send Major Noake (who succeeded me in the command of the Wanganui district) with an expedition to search the different rivers, whither these natives had fled. This work he successfully carried out, taking a

CONCLUSION

good many prisoners, thus finally ending the war on the west coast. This district now contains some of the richest pastoral farms in New Zealand, the country being thickly populated, held in comparatively small holdings, and having prosperous and thriving townships situated in various parts of the coast.

In this little work, my readers will notice I have mentioned the names of very few officers, my reason being that I have only written what has come under my personal observation. There are many officers and men who did most heroic actions, but I could only give them from hearsay.

My chief object in writing this, is to show the great difficulty my respected and revered General, the late Sir Duncan A. Cameron, had to contend against, in the unwarrantable interference by the late Sir George Grey, which caused the whole army to be blamed for that of which they were perfectly innocent. Had General Cameron been allowed to carry out the war

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in the manner he had instructed his officers to do, as is clearly shown in his letter to me, a copy of which is given in the early pages of this book, the result would have been very different.

It was just the same with the late Major-General Sir Trevor Chute, with whom I had the pleasure and privilege of being on most intimate terms, and who told me of the great interference, and the difficulties he had to contend against, with Sir George Grey as Governor.

As the facts I have mentioned in this book, the truth of which I can vouch for, have never before been published, their publication now will be a small addendum to the history of New Zealand, my adopted country, and will, I hope, be appreciated.

There is no doubt that one of the results of the war now going on in South Africa against the Boers, will be necessary reforms in various departments of the army; and it is to be hoped that the same opportunity will be taken to make a General commanding an army in the field in time of war,

CONCLUSION

absolutely independent, as regards his military operations, of the Governor of the country in which he may be serving, and thus prevent such disastrous consequences as have occurred in New Zealand and other countries.

THE END.

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